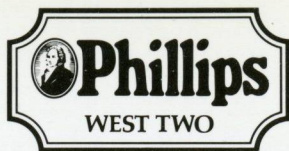


No. 184 February 1992

Hillandale

NEWS





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HILLDALE NEWS

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded 1919

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Front cover illustration: Megginch Castle, Errol, the home of Great Scott Records

EDITOR'S CHAT

Trailer for 1992

Now that the Christmas and New Year celebrations are over we can turn our attention to the year ahead. The near future will bring several articles on a wide variety of subjects. The story of "Records in Store" by Frank Andrews is continued. This issue has a fascinating glimpse of an aristocratic record company which operated in the heart of the Scottish countryside. There will be a brief history of the Lambert Cylinder Company's British connections. There will be reviews of some interesting books and some recent re-issued recordings of the past.

London Meetings

The Chairman has asked me to point out that from the March 1992 meeting all London Meetings will start at **6.45pm** unless stated otherwise.

Treasurer

The Treasurer has tweaked my ear and asked me to bring two points to the notice of members:

- 1) Subscriptions are due by the 1st of March 1992 and members are asked to remit them to the Treasurer as soon as possible to ensure that they continue to receive their magazine without interruption.
- 2) The Society has now opened an account with Girobank plc, 93, George Street, Edinburgh EH2 3JL. The account number is: 19 505 5306. This should enable many of our European members to remit money for their subscriptions and book purchases to the Society without any extra charges.

Request

Finally I would mention that I would welcome contributions from members as possible material for publication in Hillandale News.

I would also like to announce that I am able to receive copy from intending contributors on 3.5" 720Kb and 1.44Mb or 5.25" 360Kb floppy discs. At the moment I can accept material submitted in ASCII and Microsoft Word.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in Hillandale News must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.**

Hence the deadline for the **April** issue will be **15th February 1992.**

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

Tel: (071) 229 9090, Fax: (071) 792 9201.

GREAT SCOTT RECORDS

by Chris Hamilton

The Drummond family

Great Scott Records was a small record company based in Scotland during the mid 1930s. It was owned by John Drummond of Megginch, 15th Baron Strange and his wife Violet.

Before going into the history of Great Scott Records I would like to dwell a little on the background of John Drummond. Malcolm, son of Andrew, King of Hungary and Queen Margaret came to Scotland in the 11th century and obtained a grant of land from King Robert II. Their son Maurice, after trying his hand at the Crusades in 1256, became a knight and hereditary steward by marrying the heiress to a hereditary knighthood and stewardship! The family assumed the surname Drummond, or to be more exact they took the name Drumin from their original grant of land. This soon became standardized as Drummond.

In the 16th century the family had a feud with the Murrays during which they burnt the best part of that family while they were at worship in their church. This caused the Drummonds to move from the Highlands and they bought Megginch Castle at Errol in Perthshire. At that time Megginch Castle was fairly new and was surrounded by fertile land.

John Drummond was born on 6th May 1900 to Captain Malcolm Drummond J.P., D.C. and his wife Geraldine (daughter of the 1st Baron Amherst of Hackney). He was a great-grandson of Lady Charlotte née Murray (daughter of the 4th Duke of Atholl) and the 9th Baron Strange, himself fifth in descent from James Stanley (later 7th Earl of Derby). One can see that John Drummond had an impeccable aristocratic pedigree. His sister Victoria was a marine engineer, a most unusual occupation for a lady in the years between the two World Wars! Another sister, Frances was an artist.

He, by his own admission in his autobiography "An Inheritance of Dreams", felt that his education in the traditional classics at Eton bore no relevance to the life he wished to live after he left school. "I never visualized a future", he wrote, "in which I should have to ask for a railway ticket in Ancient Greek or know a girl who would welcome love letters in Latin verse." The only subjects he claimed he was interested in at school were, chemistry, physics, botany, zoology, mechanics and any similar scientific pursuits. After leaving school he went into the army where he found military subjects had some relevance and practical value in the real world.

He inherited Megginch Castle and its estates after the First World War, on the death of his father. He consulted a friendly businessman as to what was to be done. The family were short of liquid assets, as many similar families were at that time, and death duties had to be paid. This adviser said that much land would have to be sold to clear the death duties and what was left would not provide a decent living but could be sold and the proceeds invested to allow John Drummond to move elsewhere and live modestly in relative

comfort. After serious thought and much deliberation he decided to ignore that advice. He was the twentieth generation of his line. The estate had been in the family for around 400 years and he reckoned he had enough guts and talent to utilise to turn the estate into a profit making enterprise, in spite of his lack of knowledge of business affairs.

John Drummond's first move had to be to find enough cash to settle the death duties and leave some over to run the estate and turn into more cash. Megginch Castle contained several works of art of considerable value, but he did not wish to dispose of them as he considered them all part and parcel of the family heritage. However several valuable books were sold. In one of the rooms in Megginch was a very fine full-length portrait of his great-grandfather's sister and her daughter painted by Angelica Kauffmann. The daughter married the Lord Howard de Walden of those days. John approached her descendant, who was reputed to be extremely wealthy, to find out if he would like to purchase this picture. He turned out to be a charming person and a deal was entered into without any bargaining or signing of contracts etc. A few days later a delightful letter arrived along with a cheque (there was no mention of the cheque in the letter!). This cheque represented the largest sum of money John had ever seen and was enough to settle all the death duties on his father's estate.

John Drummond was a man of many parts. As well as running and modernising the estate he at one time owned the first fast food restaurant in London, a cinema in Leighton Buzzard and after Great Scott Records ran a film company. He also developed one of the first machines for milking cows. He was one of the first, if not the first, to use a Caterpillar tractor on a farm. He also was a pioneer user of combine harvesters in Scotland. After the Second World War he moved into organic farming, long before the current interest in this sphere! Lastly and not least he was an author with 10 books to his credit: *The Bride Wore Black* 1942, *Pocket Show Book* 1943, *Charter for the Soil* 1944, *Playing to the Gods* 1944, *Inheritance of Dreams* 1945, *A Candle in England* 1946, *Behind Dark Shutters* 1948, *Gold over the Hill* 1950, *The Naughty Mrs Thornton* 1952 and *Proof Positive* 1956.



John Drummond of Megginch, 15th Baron Strange

Great Scott Records and their artists

Great Scott Records was set up in late 1933. John Drummond purchased the recording equipment from the administrators of Edison Bell Ltd. This was quality machinery. It was all designed by P.G.A.H.Voigt; the condenser microphone, the moving-coil cutting head, weight-operated turntable and the amplifier. Voigt was a pioneer developer of the moving-coil cutting head, which claimed to give a better quality of recording than the moving-iron type. Edison-Bell first used his cutting head in 1926.

Most of the recordings were made in the great hall at the castle and all the manufacturing was carried out in a factory which had been set up in one of the stable buildings in the courtyard. (This building was unfortunately severely damaged by fire about a month or so after my visit to Lady Strange at Megginch Castle last April.) John McIntosh, the chief engineer of Great Scott Records, told me the electroplating of the masters took 24 hours. The Company employed less than ten people. These included the estate secretary, John F. McIntosh, the engineer, Hugh Lawrie, who printed the record labels and Leslie, the brother of Tom Logie, the estate gamekeeper. Leslie was the salesman of the company and went round the record dealers to encourage them to stock the records.



The Courtyard of Megginch Castle. The record factory was on the right of the picture.

The roster of artists consisted mainly of local talent, though some artists from as far north as Beaulieu, near Inverness and as far south as Coldstream in Berwickshire made records for Great Scott. The well-known Scots comedian Wullie Lindsay, who made records for Parlophone in the late 1920s, recorded for Great Scott. As far as I am aware he was one of two artists on Great Scott who had recorded for other companies. Other artists included The Fayre Four, a group of four young female concertina players; the Dundee Gaelic Choir; Perth and District Prize Pipe Band; Silver City Harmonica Band; the Astorians Dance Band; Harry Smead and His Boys and Wm. Hartley's "Tiny Tots" Orchestra. William Hartley was the father of Fred Hartley, of Fred Hartley and His Quintet fame (who made many records for Regal Zonophone and other companies). He ran the Dundee School of Music, in Bell Street, Dundee. He formed a small orchestra from his young pupils, aged six to eleven, which he called the "Tiny Tots" Orchestra.

Another band who made recordings for the company was John Reid's Highland Orchestra. John Reid lived in Newtyle, a village just north of Dundee. He was known over a wide area as 'Dancie Reid' and taught the fiddle and country dancing. 'Dancie Reid's' dance band consisted of members of his family, and was one of the earliest Scottish dance bands to broadcast on the wireless. The concert was held in the Wharncliffe Hall in Newtyle and was broadcast in 1933.

There were quite a number of solo performers who made recordings for Great Scott. Among these were Angus Fitchett, a well-known fiddler, from Dundee; Helen MacRae, from Beaulie in Inverness-shire, was well known around Inverness for her violin playing at concerts and ceilidhs in the 1930s and worked with the GPO in Inverness; Alex Henderson, a violinist from the village of Torphins in Aberdeenshire where he was the local tailor; Alex Innes, a shoemaker from Tarland, another Aberdeenshire village, was an expert with the tin whistle; Mackenzie Reid, David Raitt and Ernesto Jaconelli were all piano-accordion players; Hugh Campbell, a highly regarded baritone of the day; J. C. Menzies, tenor; Angus Morrison (tenor), who later recorded for Beltona; Alfred J. Forbes, a tenor from Dundee and Fraser White, the thirteen-year-old chorister from St.Ninian's Cathedral Perth, who won the Premier Prize, a silver cup presented by The Federation of British Music Industries, at the Perth Music Festival in March 1934.



Frances Drummond, "Apollo", the artist sister of John Drummond of Megginch

I had the pleasure of meeting James Donaldson, who made a couple of recordings for Great Scott. He played the button accordion. The instrument he used was made by the famous Italian manufacturer Dallapé. James lived at the time with his widowed mother in Methil in Fife. He had started his working days in the coal mines but later left to work on the land. For many years he worked as a grieve on various farms in North-East Fife. In his spare time he played in a band which performed all around Fife and the surrounding area. He described how difficult it was to travel to Errol to make his recordings. He had to take the train from Methil to Thornton Junction, just north of Kirkcaldy, change train to catch the Perth train. On arrival at Perth he had to change trains once more and catch the Perth to Dundee train which stopped at Errol station. He then had to walk one and a half miles through the snow to Megginch Castle to be there by about 10 o'clock in the morning! He normally played Scottish dance music, folk tunes and traditional airs. However he was



William Hartley and his "Tiny Tots" Orchestra. Reproduced by permission of D. C. Thomson Ltd.

asked to play Adeste Fideles, La Marseillaise and the Cuckoo Waltz. These he recorded, playing the music by sight after little or no time to rehearse! It is difficult to see how these tunes could have sold well in Scotland in spite of the excellent quality of the performances! Anyhow this question did not arise as a few weeks after making these recordings James received a letter from the Company informing him that his record would not be appearing in the shops as the company had ceased trading. However before the demise of Great Scott, he was sent a couple of test pressings of his recordings along with a letter congratulating him on his fine playing. He had also a promise that his record would be on sale in the not too distant future.



James Donaldson with his Dallapé button accordeon

Jim Donaldson was also able to give me some idea of the conditions under which the recordings were made. His recordings were made in the great hall of the castle. The recording equipment was set up in a small booth in one corner of the hall. The microphone was suspended from the ceiling on long wires. There were also some strategically placed leather baffles to improve the acoustic of the hall. This explains why most of the Great Scott records I have heard have an extremely resonant acoustic.

Each record had a catalogue number which was usually the matrix number of one of its sides. The earliest catalogue number I have come across is A116 and the latest A524. To date I have found that the Company issued 84 records. This represents about 166 recordings. There are probably several more as Great Scott advertised a private recording service, but these would not have been on general sale. So far I have come across only one catalogue. This is dated Autumn 1934. I know the records were initially sold at 2/-

each and this price was reduced to 1/6d in the autumn of 1934. As the recording ledgers of the company have not survived I am unable to determine the recording dates of any of their issues; neither am I able to give dates of issue of these recordings. However Great Scott Records commenced business in late 1933 and ceased to trade in late 1935.

Private recordings

The private recording service offered three types of facilities. For those who just wanted one record of themselves performing, the recording was cut onto a synthetic resin in its soft stage. This was then baked and in the course of a few hours was hard enough to be played on a conventional gramophone using trailing needles. This was the only copy and further copies could not be made.

The second method was to record the performer on wax, process the wax and provide the artist with a dozen shellac copies in specially printed folders. This cost approximately £5. Further copies were offered at a very moderate price (not given in the catalogue).

The third method was used to record an approved artist who considered that he/she might be able to sell his/her records through the shops in the district from which he/she came. Here Great Scott Records undertook to do the recording work entirely free as long as the artist guaranteed the sale of an agreed number of records sufficient to cover Great Scott's expenses. Thereafter the Company gave the artist a royalty per record (around 2½d per record according to Jim Donaldson).

Sleeves and labels

There were at least three styles of record sleeves. The first had a sort of "art deco" design and picture drawn by Frances Drummond, a sister of John Drummond. The sleeves done by her were signed "Apollo" (her nom de plume, called after her studios, which were named Apollo Studios).

Great Scott Records were advertised on one or two occasions in *The Gramophone* and were available in England from Harrods and The Army & Navy Stores. Obviously several shops around Scotland sold them but as to whether they were available from other English stores and shops I do not know. I would welcome any information on this.

The second style had a similar logo at the top of the front side of the sleeve: "Great Scott Records Present". Underneath was the title followed by the artist and then the price. There was a variation of this sleeve which incorporated a photograph of the artist.

The third type of sleeve had a complete change in style of logo and as the sleeve had holes to show the labels of the records no details of titles or artistes appeared on these sleeves. This third type came from the era of the 1/6d retail price.

All sleeves viewed so far were a sort of deep salmon pink in colour with a black cloth tape border on the outside edges to provide some lateral support. The print was in black, and was the only other colour used except for the first type where green was used to colour some of the background.

There were two main styles of label. The first was in a salmon pink colour similar to the sleeve but the printing here was in dark blue as opposed to black. The second style had a sky blue background with gold printing. The logo was similar to the earlier style. However there was one significant addition to the label. This was a stroboscope design on the outer

edge of the label. This style of label was introduced in 1934 to coincide with the price reduction to 1/6d.

Great Scott Records were the only Scottish record company to record, manufacture and distribute their own records "in-house". Any other contemporary Scottish record company I have come across contracted at least part of its operations out to other organisations. Great Scott's catalogue of Autumn 1934 claims that they were the only records manufactured in Great Britain outside the London area. Frank Andrews, whose encyclopaedic knowledge of the British record scene is unrivalled, has confirmed that this claim was quite probably valid.

Acknowledgements

In concluding this brief history of Great Scott Records I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Right Honourable Lady Strange for all her help in providing me with details of her family; for the use of some of her family photographs and for allowing me to take photographs of her home and the stables where the record factory used to be.

A listing of their records will appear in the next issue.

HILLANDALE BOOKLIST

With immediate effect all enquiries and orders for items from the Booklist should be sent to the following address:

C.L.P.G.S. Booklist, c/o George Glastris, [REDACTED] Brighton BN2 2SR.

NEW ITEMS NOW AVAILABLE

- | | | |
|-------|---|--------|
| B 204 | The Complete Regal Catalogue 1914 to 1932 by Arthur Badrock and Frank Andrews | £26.00 |
| B 209 | "Sound Recordings" by Peter Copeland. Published by The National Sound Archive | £7.60 |
| B 210 | "O Lovely Knight". Biography of Sir Landon Ronald by Bridget Duckenfield. Hardback | £15.95 |

Overseas buyers should add 10% to these prices

RECORDS IN STORE

by Frank Andrews

Being a fuller version of the programme he presented at the August 1990 Society meeting in Neasden

Part III

The Ariel Grand Record — 9000 Series

Only 9018 is to be found in the 1914 Ariel Grand Records Catalogue, from Grammavox sides of 1911. No numbers are known between 9100 and 9200. Those in the 9000 block show matrices were employed from Beka Grand Records, Jumbo Records and Grammavox Records, and all were on records issued before January 1914. These form an enigmatic number group as regards chronology. Some of the Beka sources have been seen with a "K" prefix to the Ariel catalogue numbers.

The Ariel Grand Record (From The British Zonophone Co. Ltd.) 9200 and 3500 Series

In January 1914 J. G. Graves Ltd. turned to another source for the possible supply of Ariel Grand Records when they wrote to the Gramophone Co. Ltd. enquiring about placing an order for Ariel Records. Eventually an order was agreed asking for 250,000 discs, John G. Graves himself selecting a thousand titles from the current British Zonophone Record — The Twin Catalogue of the British Zonophone Co. Ltd., whose discs were pressed by the Gramophone Co. Ltd. The highest number known with this known with this first order of Zonophone sources for Ariels is 9747 which had one side of a Zonophone Record — The Twin that was first issued in July 1914, so the discs had all been delivered by late 1914 or early in 1915. The oldest recordings in this series were from 1908. All had gone from Graves's catalogue by 1921. After bringing the 9200 series into use, and with only a few numbers used in the 3000 series, which being Polyphonmusikwerke repertoire had been lost with the outbreak of war, Graves brought into use a 3500 series for a new bulk order from the latest Zonophone catalogue which made use of Zonophone — Twins and Zonophone Records issued between 1908 and July/August 1923.

Graves prices always reflected the prices of the suppliers own labelled discs, so that as prices rose or were reduced over the years, Graves did likewise. The most expensive the Zonophone discs became was 4/- (20p) for the standard 10" size in the immediate post-Great War period, having been at 2/6d (12.5p) in 1914. The Society's re-printed Ariel Catalogue of 1921 shows prices were beginning to fall with the discs therein at 3/6d (17.5p) each.

When Graves first ordered from The Gramophone Co. Ltd. in 1914, the decision had been taken to reduce the Zonophone — Twin Records to 1/6d (7.5p) which caused Graves much concern when he was told and he said he would not have placed his order if he had known. He was paying 7³/₄d (3.25p) for discs to sell at 2/6d (12.5p). He was paying Polyphonwerke only 6d (2.5p) and for Fonotipia Ltd.'s 10³/₄" Odeon pressed Ariels, including such as McCormack and Jadlowker, he paid only 6³/₄d (2.8p) and when Odeon and Jumbo were reduced he had a rebate of 2d for his Odeon-pressed Ariels.

45000 to 50000 Zonophone Ariels were already pressed when Graves was told of the reduction. His option was to close the order below the guaranteed minimum of 250,000 discs which he was bound to take and still to have a minimum of 250 pressings for each disc at the agreed price of 7³/_d each. An alternative, if he allowed his order to stand, was for a rebate of 1²/_d per record, which was equivalent to £600 which he could utilize for extra advertising of his Ariels which would have to sell for 1/6d each instead of 2/6d each. I do not know the outcome of these alternative offers. Graves were still offering their Gramophones and a selection of records, through mail order, with a 5/- (25p) down payment during 1914.

Ariel Grand Records (from Zonophone) & The Duplication of Catalogue Numbers

The next bulk order of Ariels, from the Zonophone catalogue, following upon those numbered in the 3500 series carried catalogue numbers in a 2100/2300 series. The lowest numbers thereby duplicated the higher numbered Ariels which had been pressed from Jumbo Record matrices and none of which remained by the time the 1921 Ariel catalogue was printed: numbers 2101 to 2144.

The highest number within this group known to me as yet is 2327 which has one side pressed from a matrix used on a Zonophone Records issued in the Sept/Oct 1923 supplement. Yet again that 2100 to 2300 series included recordings of 1908 and which had already been in Graves's catalogues under the 9200 series and the 3500 series - obviously titles which sold well. (Arthur Badrock has knowledge of 2331 as the highest in this series.)

In ordering by bulk Graves did not expect the whole of each order to be filled with one delivery and so, once he had chosen his couplings for his Ariels, they would be delivered in instalments which explains why the 1921 catalogue's highest number in the 2100 to 2300 series is 2289. The order for these must have been placed soon after that with the 3500 catalogue series. Perhaps the reductions in prices in the trade prompted the ordering of new stocks?

A new feature on Graves's post Great War issues was the omission of the artistes' credits in lieu of which were printed various legends, some of which read "Masterpieces of Music Specially Recorded by the World's Most Famous Bands and Instrumentalists", "Specially Recorded by Celebrated Orchestras and Instrumentalists" and "Special Ariel Series of Popular Song Successes by Star Artistes and Comedians". Such legends appeared on both the Sound Recording Co. Ltd.'s recordings and on the Zonophone Ariels.

Ariel Grand Records from Zonophone Record and Zonophone (the 100 to ?1113 series)

The 100 to 1113 Ariel series covered the last bulk order, or orders, to be placed with The British Zonophone Co. Ltd. The one thousand, plus, couplings were not ordered at one time but the Ariel numbers progressed with each batch ordered so that within the span of numbers there are to be found the same recordings issued on differently numbered Ariels. They were the last Ariels to be pressed from Zonophone Record and Zonophone matrices, the last order being officially cancelled on November 17th 1928.

A feature of many of these Ariels was the use of pseudonyms and from April 1926 the new electrical recordings on Zonophone Records began to appear in Graves's lists.

(Ariel Grand 1094 was played, Sanderson's song "The Company Sergeant-Major" by Hubert Mason who was Foster Richardson on Zonophone 5073 rec. 9/2/28)

The Ariel Grand Records from J. E. Hough Ltd.'s Winners (with stuck-on lilac labels)

These over-labelled Winners, having gold printed lilac labels, it is almost certain were Winners deleted from J. E. Hough Ltd.'s catalogue. The catalogue series given to these had been used with the first Ariels which had come from Beka Grand Record's matrices. The lowest number used on the lilac labelled Ariels has yet to be determined. Only a few have been logged, with numbers between the mid-220's up to 334.

They were the only Ariels for which John Graves never chose couplings, although he may have chosen discs from all the Winner deletions, if that is what they were, rather than take the whole amount available.

There are none of these discs listed in the Ariel May 1921 catalogue and at least one of the Ariels was still in the Winner catalogue of July 1921, although all the others I know of had been deleted by then. It does look as if the Winner source Ariels were not available until 1922.

Like the Zonophone source Ariels, the Winner source omitted the artistes' names and, in lieu, carried the legends, "Special Ariel Series of Song Successes by Star Artists and Comedians" or "Masterpieces of Music Specially Recorded by the World's Most Famous Bands and Instrumentalists" etc. To my knowledge no Ariel Grands were pressed directly from Winner matrices. The over-stuck label was quite different in design from the brown labelled Ariels which bore only three "Ariels" in the design as against the usual seven.

(An example demonstrated was "Empireland Selection No.2" by "Band" on Ariel 230 but which underneath the label, as a Winner, issued in February 1917, was credited to the Band of H. M. Life Guards on Winner 3085.)

Before passing on to the last company which pressed for J. G. Graves Ltd. it should be noted that, on a number of occasions, some Ariels pressed from one supplier's matrices would be replaced by others pressed from a different source but, having the same titles, were again numbered with the original Ariel catalogue number instead of within the range of record numbers allocated to the second supplier's pressings.

Mr Holland, a recording expert with the Sound Recording Co. Ltd., in answer to an enquirer in one of the talking machine periodicals, stated that he had recorded some titles especially for J. G. Graves Ltd.'s Ariel Grand Records.

The Ariel Grand Records from The Parlophone Co. Ltd. (4000 & Z4500 series)

The Parlophone Company was both the last business to be contracted for the supply of Ariel records and the last to furnish supplies, and the duplication of catalogue numbers, used on earlier pressings of Ariels, was again a feature. Now it was the turn of the former Sound Recording Co. pressed Ariels in the 4000 range (Parlophone was asked to employ these numbers again.)

The Parlophone Company Ltd., although registered as a British business, was essentially a branch of the Carl Lindström A.G. complex of companies in Berlin. After the end of the 1914-1918 war, German companies, for a spell, were forbidden to set up

branches in Britain. Carl Lindström A.G. subvented that restriction by setting up the Trans-Oceanic Trading Company in Holland (which had been a neutral state during the war) and through that Dutch company, was able to set up the Parlophone Co. Ltd. in Britain, through two gentlemen who had been with Lindström's Fonotipia Limited before the war. The former Lindström/Fonotipia factory at Gas House Lane, Hertford Town was purchased from the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. who had succeeded to it from the The Hertford Record Co. Ltd. This company had been formed under the strict rules of the Board of Trade when the two German owning companies were compelled into liquidation under the Trading with the Enemy Acts.

Mr Paul Offenbacher, who had been manager fro Beka Grand Records in London before the war, under Otto Ruhl's directorship, and who, incidentally had been in internment as an enemy alien during the war, directed the affairs of the Parlophone Co. Ltd.

The Parlophone Co. Ltd. not only inherited the matrices which remained in the Hertford factory, which included repertoires which had been issued on Beka, Jumbo and Favorite prior to or during the war, but it also had access to the matrices of the German Beka, Parlophon and Odeon matrices of Carl Lindström in Germany, the Lindström matrices for overseas catalogues which were under the control of the Trans-Oceanic Trading Co and also to the Okeh matrices of the United States, a label founded by Otto Heinemann, a director of Carl Lindström A.G. who fled to the U.S.A. from London just after the outbreak of the war.

Parlophone records were first put on sale at the beginning of the 1923-1924 season in September 1923. How soon J. G. Graves Ltd. contracted Parlophone for Ariel pressings is not known but it would have been quite early. Not only were the brown and gold labels similar to those coming with the Zonophone pressings of Ariels but a few of the former Beka, Favorite and Jumbo matrices again went into service in pressing the 4000 series Ariels.

The Parlophone Co. Ltd. (and the Lindström complex of companies) passed into the control of the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. in 1925, which appears to have been the only connection when the Ariel label had any connection with Columbia and, by the time the last Ariels from Parlophone were pressed in 1937, that company and its labels were then a part of Electric and Musical Industries Ltd. formed in 1931. The Parlophone Ariels had the most far-ranging repertoire of all the others with recordings coming from North America, South America, European countries and Britain itself. After the numbering reached 4499, 4500 and onwards had a "Z" prefix.

At some point, a space at the top of the label was given over to the "IGG" monogram within a circle trade mark, with a space at the bottom of the label reserved for the royalty stamp. This reduced the surrounding "Ariels" from seven to six on the labels. The highest known Ariel is Z 4986 which was formed from two Parlophone sides issued in March 1937. Many Ariels in this 4000 series were issued with artistes under pseudonyms.

(An electrically recorded Ariel Z4589 was played at Neasden, as "Special Accordion Solo" "Down South" (Myddleton), which came through Parlophone E 6319 but which was from an European Odeon A221.243, credited to "Marceau — The Wonder Accordionist". The Parlophone was issued in August 1930.)

Lewis Limited and it's Lewis's Long Life Record

As far as I am able to determine, Lewis Ltd was incorporated in 1909 out of a business founded in 1888. The company had five department stores, if not more, and they were sited in Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow.

In August 1934 it was reported that Lewis's had recently installed public address systems in each of their stores, with B.T.H.'s Sound Amplifier Systems, reputed to be among the loudest type of amplifiers in the country at 120 watts (2 x 40 watts and 2 x 20 watts). They were used to relay their restaurant orchestras to the customers while they shopped and to broadcast stores' announcements and information generally. No doubt the the Lewis's Long Life Records were also played over the system during the period they were offered for sale.

The discs were sold from mid-1933 into early 1935. They were of 8" diameter and were pressed by British Homophone Co. Ltd at its Stonebridge Park Works, Willesden, London NW10, from matrices in use with its own Plaza labelled discs.

The Lewis records were numbered in L prefixed series, with blue and gold labels with a stroboscopic edging. I believe all artists were under pseudonyms, different from the pseudonyms already in use for the Plaza label. About 100 different discs were issued.

(Lewis's Long Life Life Record L 68 "Webster Newman's Dance Band, with vocal in "Little Man You've had a Busy Day", was played. This was issued on Plaza P 279 as "Ben Fields and His Band" but was in fact The Casani Club Orchestra directed by Charlie Kunz, with Dawn Davis as vocalist and was recorded on July 7th 1934.)

Marks and Spencer Limited with The Marspen Record

Michael Marks was born in Russian Poland in 1859. Due to persecution of the Jews by the Czar of all the Russias, Marks came to Britain in his twenties, not having a word of English.

Tom Spencer was born in Skipton, Yorkshire, in 1851, but later moved to the city of Leeds. In England Marks began earning a living as a pedlar and then progressed to set up his first "Penny Bazaar" at Stockton-on-Tees. He later set up a "Penny Bazaar" by selling from a trestle table in the Kirkgate Market in Leeds.

In 1886, in the new covered market in Leeds, he opened a "Penny Bazaar" with a notice which read: "Don't Ask the Price — It's a Penny". Marks was then finding financial support from a wholesaler named Dewhirst who began teaching the English language.

Dewhirst had a book-keeper in Tom Spencer, and that is how the two met who were to found one of the most respected businesses in Britain today. It was in 1894 that Marks asked Spencer to become his partner, he contributing £300 with Marks declaring a like sum from his finances. Marks married and had a number of children. Spencer's wife continued his English lessons.

Marks opened a "Penny Bazaar" in a shop in Manchester, with he and his family living above. Other bazaars were opened in Warrington, Birkenhead and Bolton. Painted across the shops' frontages was: "Don't Ask the Price — It's a Penny".

When the first bazaar was opened in London, at Southwark in 1899, others had opened

in Cardiff, Bath, Birmingham and Newcastle. Also opened in 1899 was a specially built warehouse in Derby Street, Manchester. It was in 1901 that the bazaars, and what stalls were still in being, had the trading name changed to: "Marks and Spencer Penny Bazaar".

The business was converted into Marks and Spencer Limited in 1903 which then had 34 outlets throughout Britain. Tom Spencer retired soon afterwards and died in 1905.

Michael Marks died in 1907 by which time there were seven Marks & Spencer's bazaars open in London. With Marks's death the management went to another director, outside of the Marks and Spencer families, and it was not until 1916 that a son, Simon Marks, regained control through buying shares from others who sold at exorbitant prices.

The other chains of "Bazaars" were acquired in London, from The Arcadian Bazaar Company and the London "Peacock Bazaar Company" so that, by 1913 a third of all Marks & Spencer shops were situated in London; 56 out of a total of 145. Consequently the headquarters were moved from Manchester to London.

The exigencies of the Great War brought to an end the "Nothing over a Penny" aspect of Marks & Spencer's business although prices were kept as low as possible but variable and continued so until the company went public in 1926, when the policy of nothing over 5/- (25p) was adopted.

By then Marks & Spencer had been selling its The Marspen Record for a few years. The initial releases were of nearly 5½" diameter and two suppliers were under contract. J. E. Hough Ltd. from the Edison Bell Works at Camberwell supplied the Marspens pressed from the matrices it had recorded for its small disc "The Bell" and the Crystalate Mfg. Co. works near Tonbridge in Kent supplied Marspen pressings from The Sound Recording Co.'s matrices used for its Little Popular Records and Mimosa Records. Records of this small diameter began to be sold in 1921 the standard size 10" and 12" disc had suffered such large increases in prices that much custom was lost. Thus we find on all small discs not only a repertoire which had been especially recorded for children to be used on small "children's model gramophones", but a repertoire which reflected what was issued on the much more expensive standard size discs.

The labels on The Marspen Records were printed black on a Post Office red paper. In 1926 the Marspen discs from both sources were increased in size to 6" diameter, the highest number known being 714 in a series which appears to have begun at number 600 or 601.

The Marspen Records from the Sound Recording Co.'s masters, which later passed to the Crystalate Mfg. Co., were given "MS" prefixed matrix numbers starting at MS.1 or they drew on the "E" matrices used on Mimosas. The catalogue numbers began at 250 with 280 being the highest known so far. My acknowledgements to Arthur Badrock for information received.

Marks & Spencer also took on Imperial 10" discs and the later Rex records from the Crystalate Company, and the 8" Broadcasts, when they were introduced in the summer of 1927 by The Vocalian Gramophone Co. Ltd; but the Marspen Record was the only label exclusive to their chain of stores. Full details of all your Marspen discs will be gratefully received.

(Marspen 6" disc 732 was played which was a violin solo with piano accompaniment of the main theme of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, beautifully played straight through, just the once. This was from The Bell matrix from Bell 392 recorded in 1925 and issued in 1926. The artist could have been either Michael Zacharewitsch or John Dunn, both "Edison Bell" solo violin artists.)

Boots Cash Chemists — Solid stock and pliable discs

Jesse Boot, who was born in 1850, succeeded to his father's herbalist business and soon after opened his first chemists shop in Nottingham in 1872. Successful in business he was able to open more shops in other parts of the country. In 1888 he founded the Boots Pure Drug Co. Ltd. to manufacture supplies for the shops he had established. In that venture he absorbed the Midland Drug Co. Ltd.'s business which had been founded in 1883.

As more and more shops were being added to the Boot's chain, separate controlling companies were founded for various regions. In Eastern England "Boot Limited" was formed which was re-named Boots Cash Chemists (Eastern), Ltd. in 1892. A "(Western), Ltd" was formed and, in 1899 Boots Cash Chemists (Lancs.), Ltd. was formed to be followed in 1901 by the "(Southern), Ltd." company. The latter was actually founded on the acquisition of Day's Southern & Metropolitan Drug Co. Ltd. which already had 19 different outlets in the London area alone. Boots Cash Chemists (Northern), Ltd. was incorporated in 1910.

The Boot's business had been built up into the world's largest retail chemists undertaking, with libraries and departments dealing in other commodities in addition to the original business of dealing in chemicals, medicines, drugs and perfumes.

Riches enabled Jesse Boot to act as a philanthropist and he became a benefactor to the University College in Nottingham. He became Sir Jesse Boot in 1909, was created a baronet in 1917 and a baron in 1929 when he took the title of Lord Trent, after the river on which Nottingham stands.

In 1917 he headed a syndicate which was to put a bid in for the Mead Works in Gas House Lane, Hertford, where records were being pressed with Labels owned by Fonotipia Ltd. and Carl Lindström (London) Ltd. and were being manufactured under the supervision of a H.M.Government Comptroller. He had been appointed to keep the business viable which had been sequestered from the owning companies and which was to be put up for auction.

Boot's syndicate wanted the works to produce insulating materials for the war effort which they estimated could meet 60% of their requirements in fulfilling an order they had from the British government. Boots never acquired the record factory as a private arrangement was entered into with the Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. under which the Hertford Record Company Ltd. was formed which took over the factory and its record manufacture.

The earliest known involvement of the chain of Boots Cash Chemists shops occurred circa 1922 where 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter discs named "Boots The Chemists — British Made" were for sale. A B.1000 series is known, with yellow labels printed in black, and the few examples known were pressed from Aeolian Co. Ltd.'s masters as used for its "Little Marvel" discs which were supplied to and only sold by F. W. Woolworth & Co. Ltd. The

discs were pressed at Hayes, Middlesex by Aeolian's "Universal Music Co. Ltd. It is not known if the Boots discs progressed to the 6" size as was the case with The Little Marvels. Full details are required of all Boots discs and their sleeves. A prefixed "C" catalogue numbered series is rumoured.

After the Vocalian Gramophone Co. Ltd. acquired the records and the machines business of the Aeolian Co. Ltd. in 1925 it decided to terminate its production of 10" and 12" Aco and Vocalion Discs and launched its 8" Broadcasts in 1927. One of the most profitable outlets for these was Boots The Cash Chemists but only under the broadcast name.

The only other discs to bear the name of Boots were the non-inflammable, flexible discs made by the Goodson Gramophone Co. Ltd. of a material called Rhodoid in 1929. Goodson had planned to begin pressing their pliable discs in 1928 employing a facility for printing designs and advertisements across the whole surface of the discs which they could induce others in business to utilize for advertising purposes but, from the start, the Goodson company was in trouble with the Home Office as their first discs had a celluloid content and were highly inflammable. Goodson also found itself in trouble with the problem of royalty stamps. They would not adhere to the discs made from Rhodoid.

Boots Pure Drug Co. were one of the businesses who took advantage of Goodson's facility for printing advertisements upon the surfaces of their white or cream coloured records. "Boots The Chemists" discs were generally being printed in red. There were no catalogue numbers common to both sides; the record numbers printed were the matrix numbers.

Goodson Records proper appear to have been given catalogue numbers, circa February 1930, beginning at 100. Besides being pressed from the company's British recorded masters Goodson also had access to other British recorded masters, others from the U.S.A. and some recordings in Italian, which have not been traced either from Italy or from U.S.A.'s "ethnic" masters. I acknowledge the assistance of Arthur Badrock for the matrix information.

("Io son Docile" from "Il Barbier di Seviglia" sung by Rini di Bitono was played at Neasden on a "Gifts for Every Occasion — Buy them from Boots The Chemists — Over 800 Branches in Great Britain record No. 4620)

To be continued.

ALL IN ONE DAY

by Michael Hegarty

The month of June signals the start of final examinations for secondary school students and for some teachers a change of location for a week or two acting as superintendent of these tests. I enjoy this as it affords a chance to find perhaps something "new" in the way of old records. My International Zonophone X-44128 by Collins and Harlan and the yellow Odeon 0469 by John McCormack were found this way. Last year found me posted to Wexford Town and so to the shops...

At an auction house, where one could just about get inside the door, someone said "Yes! I have some 78s, come back tomorrow and I'll have 'em out". Tomorrow showed about 20 discs, without covers and of no interest to me except for one, an HMV IP 1187 by George Ross, the Champion Accordion Player (and a Wexford man). The price asked was about four times the going rate and so on a "take it or leave it basis" I took it. I did not have any of George Ross's four 78s and the prospect of finding these records, made in the dying years of the gramophone, was not good.

Then I remembered that George still lived in Wexford and as I understood, not more than a mile of where I now was. The thought struck me — why not call to see him if I could. So, returning to the school I asked the first student I met if he knew anyone in the Faythe (pronounced Fight). "Yes", was the reply, "I walk that way every day." "Did you ever hear of George Ross?", I asked the boy. "Yes", he replied, "He is my Granny's brother."

So, in the late afternoon, record in hand I sought and found the cosy Ross home. When the door opened I asked if Mr Ross was at home. "Yes", was the reply, "but he does not work any more." Then the lady saw the record in my hand and when I told her it was one of his I was invited inside to meet the great accordion player. He did not have any of his own records, he told me, but he knew the catalogue numbers and all the tunes on them too. He then told me of how he came to make them.

One evening in September 1956 a friend suggested to him that he should make some records and that he should write to the Gramophone Company in Dublin asking for an audition. George said "I won't bother" but his friend said "I'll write for you". A reply came quickly stating that HMV had enough of Irish fiddlers and accordion players in their catalogue but as he was Irish Champion they would indeed audition him. This was done and the result — yes! they would be delighted to cut his records and provide a better accompanist.

After another train journey to Dublin and some hours of practice of getting attuned to the piano style of Stella Seaver four records were made and these were issued in late autumn of 1956 on HMV An Seamrog Series. "And what one did you find today?", he asked. I looked and said "Hornpipes 'Kelly's Fancy' and 'The Wonder' ". "Oh then the Reels 'O'Briens Fancy' and 'Sally Gardens' are on the other side", said George.

I then handed him the disc and he duly autographed it for me. We chatted about the LP he recorded for the U.S. market. I left very pleased, it's not often one still finds the record and the artist on the one day.

Anybody wishing to book stalls at £12 each please send request and cheque, made out to C.L.P.G.S., to Ruth Lambert, 24, Churchway, Weston Favell, Northampton NN3 3BT

THE THREE-IN-ONE BUST

by Christopher Proudfoot

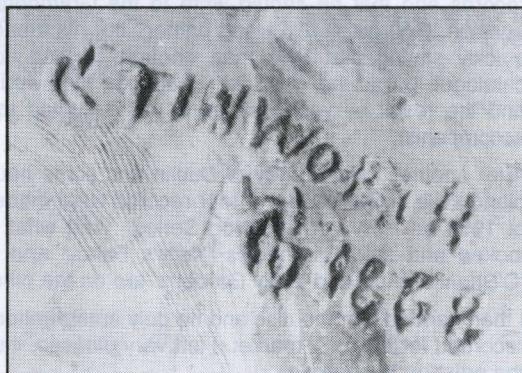
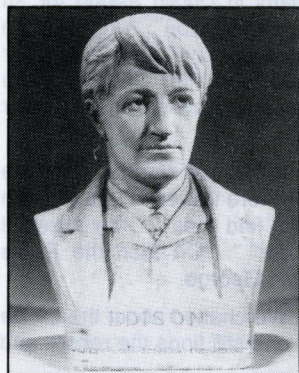
Most old hands at Society meetings in London, or visitors to the recent Cirencester exhibition, will be familiar with the bust of Edison, dated 1890 and presented "With Colonel Gouraud's Compliments". It is made of plaster-of-Paris and painted (in fact, it was last repainted by the writer, for the 1977 exhibition). The photograph in this issue shows another copy, similar in all respects except for the absence of the 1890 date. What both have in common, but no-one had previously noted, is the double signature on the reverse. Doulton & Co., Lambeth and G. Tinworth, 1888.

Doulton are famous for ceramics of every description, from drain-pipes to dinner-plates. Originally, industrial and sanitary wares predominated, but after George Tinworth came to work for them in 1866, they developed a reputation for art pottery and became leading exponents of the Arts and Crafts movement of the 1880 to 1914 period.

Tinworth (1843-1913) was the son of a Waiworth wheelwright. His talent for sculpture was innate and developed against an unsympathetic workaday background. His first exhibit at the Royal Academy, also in 1866, was a plaster of Paris group, and while most of his work at Doulton's pottery in Lambeth was translated into ceramic form (initially as decoration on stoneware water filters), it is interesting that in 1888 both he and his employers were still prepared to manufacture a bust in plaster. Presumably Gouraud (who lived at Upper Norwood, not a million miles from Lambeth) had some influence with the Doulton directors.

Did Gouraud present the busts to his most successful agents, or to favoured clients, or perhaps to influential people who might produce clients? Maybe we shall never know, but in each of these busts (the present example is the third known to the author) we have a combination of three important figures of one hundred years ago: Thomas Edison, Colonel Gouraud and George Tinworth, representing perhaps Science, Commerce and the Arts.

The bust was sold at Christie's South Kensington on December 5th 1991.



Edison Bust and George Tinworth's trademark

C.L.P.G.S.
PHONO
-FAIR.

Gramophones...Phonographs...

Gramophones...

C.L.P.G.S.
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Records...Displays...Competitions...

Needle Tins...78's...Accessories...Spares...



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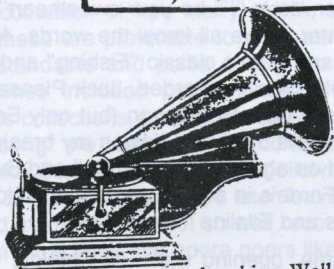
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Anybody wishing to book stalls at £12 each please send request and cheque, made out to C.L.P.G.S., to Ruth Lambert, [REDACTED] Weston Favell, Northampton NN3 3BT

THE GLORY OF THE MUSIC HALL

Ernie Bayly

reviews the Pearl 3 CD set of reissues of Music Hall performers

"The Glory of The Music Hall" (GEMM CD 9475/76/77) each CD with generous playing time and each including some very rare originals sung by legendary artists. Charles Coborn sings his "The man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo" and "Two lovely black eyes" in various languages as he did on stage. This is from an announced Odeon record, that from this period, are very rare irrespective of musical content. Harry Roberts has a very amusing "Topsy Turvy" and Harry Anderson describes his "Fishing Club". R.G.Knowles has two good songs "Adam missed it" and "The girl, the woman and the widow" (which I suspect were recorded much earlier than the notes claim). Eugene Stratton gives us "Little Dolly Daydream", Dan Leno tells us "Wait till I'm his father" (the son of the widow he is to marry!!), Alec Hurley admits his foolhardiness in a pun on the word "Piccaninny". From World War One come Mark Sheridan's "Belgium put the Kibosh on the Kaiser" and "Here we are again" in a strong style as is Leo Stormont's "Goodbye Dolly Gray" (from a previous war). Gus Elen's Berliner "Never introduce your dinah to a pal" is exceedingly rare but unfortunately is somewhat worn at the beginning. Others featured in Volume 1 are George Lashwood, Harry Randall, Vesta Tilley, Harry Champion and Harry Fragson with "Paper Bag Cookery" from HMV (most of his records were on Pathé, Edison or International Zonophone — a large proportion in French).

Volume 2 begins with Harry Ford's "Poor, proud and particular", Little Tich tells of the escapades of "The best man" and the misfortunes of a rider in "Tally Ho". George Robey is "Dame" rôles with "The Editress" and "Servants' registry office". "Something on his mind" is one of Marie Lloyd's rarest, "Rob Roy Tam o' Shanter O'Brien" is one of Harry Lauder's rarest but unfortunately its condition is poor, so is "I'll be your sweetheart" by Lil Hawthorne (from Berliner) but we can follow this latter as we all know the words. At least we can hear the style of the voice of this legend. Harry Tate's classic "Fishing" and Nellie Wallace's "Cuckoo" and "Mother's pie crust" are electrically recorded. Jack Pleasant's is represented by "I shall sulk" and "I'm shy Mary Ellen" from Homophon (but only Edison's cylinder gives all the verses). Lugubrious Sam Mayo tells us "I was having my breakfast in bed" but cheers up for "Put that gramophone record on again". "The Old Bull and Bush" is an early version, well recorded, so we hear Florrie Forde's in a young-sounding voice. We also hear from Billy Williams, Ben Albert, Belle Davis and Ellaline Terriss.

Volume 3 continues the "Top of the bill" programme, opening with Ella Shields, whose version makes "If you knew Susie" sound more like a man's song than many men I've heard. Perhaps the concern about "Germs" was new in 1922, but they're the basis of Alfred Lester's song. George Formby Snr dolefully tells us "I kept on waving my flag", Maidie Scott gives the possibilities of "If the wind had only blown the other way", G.H.Elliott is happy with "I've had my fortune told" but fat man Ernie Mayne complains "I can't do my bally bottom button up". (Incidentally Mr Mayne is buried just a few yards from Billy Williams in Shoreham's Mill Lane Cemetery under his real name Barrett.) Dolly Connolly was the wife of songwriter Percy Wenrich and sings "Moonlight Bay". May-Moore

Duprez specialised in Dutch character songs — here “Gretchen” — and Jan Latona, who often accompanied herself on the piano, has a band here for “Rickety Stairs”. Clarice Mayne, accompanied by ‘That’ (James Tate) on piano has two good songs “Come over the garden wall” and “Mrs and Mrs Smith”. Dorothy Ward was a principal boy in pantomime who kept a fine appearance right into old age and sings “I want a girl” (presumably her pantomime success). Jay Laurier contributes a good “And it was” which I’d not heard previously. Others in the programme are Billy Merson, Margaret Cooper, Harry Weldon, Gertie Gitana, Lily Morris, Norah Blaney and Albert Chevalier.

If you feel that some of the less audible songs do not bear hearing so repeatedly as others, the programming facility of the compact disc player is the solution. Never was it easier!!!

In this set (each CD is available separately), there is a total of 75 songs by top line artists. Even so, it is by no means definitive and one hopes that more CDs in the series will appear. Quite apart from rarity nowadays, there were some good singable songs during the life of Music Hall which stand entertainingly on their own without requiring any link with term such as ‘social history’, though they were created in a world now disappeared. Present day artists like Cosmotheke, some ‘folk’ singers and others still present Music Hall songs with success to delighted audiences. I’ve been a fan of Music Hall most of my life, and recommend this set most highly, for as well as firm favourites there are artists always missed from sets compiled by companies not troubling to enlist support from an expert in the subject — in this case Tony Barker, who has written the notes too.

PEOPLE, PAPER AND THINGS

The accusation of “too many old films” is often thrown at our television services, but so often these are preferable to alternative highly-forgettable offerings, and at least they are understandable and polite enough to suit Granny. Also if the viewer is lucky there are sometimes included performances from people of another age, but known from our records collections. In a recent showing of Evelyn Laye’s 1934 Gaumont British Evensong “Evensong” the last reel or so contained scenes from “La Boheme” with none other than Conchita Supervia as Musetta, followed by her in Spanish songs with guitar accompaniment. She died a year or so later leaving an all too short list of records to be remembered by and many of them not so well recorded. The 57-year-old film still conveyed her sensual Iberian attractions that opera goers liked, and her controversial vibrato doesn’t appear only in her records; the sound track had been cleaned up by CEDAR. The Australian tenor Browning Mummery also made a brief showing. Incidentally the story was written by Beverley Nichols who was Melba’s secretary for a time and who wrote her Farewell Speech (recorded on HMV DB 943).

George Frow

REPORTS

London Meeting 17th October 1991

Thursday 17th October 1991 proved to be a memorable day in more ways than one for the Society. For not only did we open our new London venue, upstairs in the annexe of The National Sound Archive in Exhibition Road, South Kensington, but those attending were lucky enough to be given a paper on Enrico Caruso and how he came to record on that March day in 1902.

Peter Martland expertly and logically sorted through the myths, half truths and legends surrounding what appeared to be a recording session funded by Fred Gaisberg.

It is surprising that such a well known artist has not been lectured on before in the Society, however the wait was well worthwhile while as we were rewarded with short pieces of film, shown on video, of Caruso as a film star (of course silently!) and on newsreel after his first operation in 1920, and of his funeral in Naples.

Regarding the initial recording session with Caruso in Milan, Peter Martland enlightened us with how Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. had done their groundwork, negotiated his fee, managed to "vet" his voice in "Germania"; when no less than three important company executives happened to be in Milan at the same time.

The resulting successful recordings were played during the course of the lecture - excellent transfers from a new mid-priced CD from Symposium Records.

Please may we have the complete paper in the Hillandale News? I am sure many members will find it fascinating reading.

Many thanks Peter for such a scholarly, instructive and entertaining evening.

George Woolford

London Meeting 21st November 1991.

In "On My Lighter Side", presented by George Woolford, the audience heard a widely varied programme, starting with "The Bassoon" sung by W. H. Berry on HMV B 445. George followed this with Morris Harvey of The Follies (a pierrot group formed by Harry Gabriel Pelissier) "Indulging in the Sincerest form of Flattery" on Odeon 66635.

"Poppies" performed by Dan Leno on HMV B 463 followed by Little Tich conducting "The Sale" on Beka 41253 were well received by the listeners. Vesta Tilley then entertained us with "Sidney's Holidays" on Jumbo A 25116. She was followed by the celebrated Savoyard Walter Passmore singing "If I were a Vanderbilt" from the musical show "Talk of the Town" on Nicole D 565.

George then took us into the world of boy meets girl with Vesta Victoria singing "Look what Percy picked up in the Park" on Zonophone 918. He followed this with Violet Loraine singing "The Gipsy Warned Me" on HMV D 487. These songs would have been labelled "saucy" in their day. The listeners were left in no doubt about their meaning!

Two more celebrated ladies of the musical show followed. Firstly Beth Tate, the Californian Girl, sang "Innocent Bessie Brown" by Irving Berlin on Pathé 93474. Connie Ediss took the stage with "I like to put a little bit on" from Leslie Stuart's comic opera "Peggy" on HMV 03252. Her powerful yet delicate voice showed why she was such an outstanding performer in her day.

The fair sex continued to hold the stage with Margaret Cooper both singing and accompanying herself with "Catch Me", one of her own compositions, on HMV 03209. W. H. Berry returned to the spotlight with "It must be very trying to be mad" from the musical "Who's Hooper?" on HMV 02866. This was a terrifying rendition with the audience experiencing every dreadful

moment as if it were for real! This almost overshadowed George Robey, the next artist. However he showed us what a superb performer he was by singing "Sing-Sing" from the musical revue "Round in 50" on Columbia 3110. Alfred Lester was next with "I do like to sing in my bath" on HMV C 2114. He showed budding Bing Crosbys, what could (or could not) be done!

George left the world of acoustic recording and brought us into the electrical era with that extraordinary performer Nellie Wallace singing "The Blasted Oak" on Decca F 5227. She was followed by Ella Shields with a superb rendering of "Burlington Bertie from Bow" with an excellent orchestral accompaniment, also on Decca, this time on F 5228. That veteran performer Charles Coborn gave us an excellent rendering of "The Man who broke the Bank at Monte Carlo" on Columbia 5665. He had been performing on stage for 43 years when he made this record in 1929! The evening's entertainment was brought to a close with Hetty King performing "Piccadilly" on Decca F 5229.

Many thanks George for letting us share such wonderful performances with you and for giving us such an enjoyable and entertaining evening.

Geoff Edwards

Meeting at The Science Museum

Several members of the Society could be seen at the reception held on December 18th at the Science Museum, Kensington, by Dillon's the Booksellers, to mark the publication of Paul Tritton's new book *The Lost Voice of Queen Victoria* (Academy Books £11.95). Over 60 years ago a Graphophone cylinder was deposited at The Science Museum by the family of the man who took a Graphophone to Balmoral and it had remained there unrecognised until the author looked into its history. He was able to tell us about the tracing of that

history in an illustrated talk, followed by Peter Copeland's explanation of how it eventually came to be played and some of the words on it deciphered. Obviously the cylinder must await another electronic leap before the rest can be interpreted. In his talk Peter also introduced us to some other Royal recordings that we didn't know about.

The little cylinder was displayed alongside an early replica Graphophone made by Mike Field, and the special machine constructed by the National Sound Archive to play it.

It was amazing to hear from our speakers that publicity about the probable Queen Victoria recording has brought in revelations of other 19th Century figures who it is claimed made records, and were dead even before the Phonograph's invention, rather the stuff of April 1st than Christmas-time.

A London Correspondent

Midlands Group

A Record Fair was held at The Central Methodist Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall on Saturday 2nd November 1991.

This fair was the first commercial venture for some years by our group. It was considered a success but with more support from the Society hopefully the next similar venture will be even better.

Some 10 stall-holders offered a wide variety of gramophone items for sale including machines, spares, literature and a comprehensive range of 78s and LPs. We were fortunate in having a first class restaurant service and the hall was ideal for this sort of event.

A good proportion of those attending were Society members, some of whom had travelled long distances and we hope they enjoyed the opportunity to meet fellow members and collectors.

Geoff Howl

Meeting at Carr's Lane Methodist Centre, Birmingham on Saturday November 16th 1991.

Chairman Eddie Dunn welcomed the members and both he and Richard Taylor reported on the highly praiseworthy 80th Birthday Exhibition at Cirencester. The hard work in staging and running such an event is only truly appreciated by those engaged in similar activities. The brochure produced for this event is in effect a comprehensive machine catalogue and is a lasting work of reference.

Mention was made of the Dudley Show, at which our group has exhibited for the last four years. We expect to be asked to participate again in 1992. Look out for further details.

The second part of the evening was devoted to a programme of Pathé records given by Eddie Dunn. He used a handsome Pathé Table Model and all fourteen records played sounded remarkably clear. The first six were of operatic arias sung by artistes ranging from Caruso and Pertile to lesser known ones. The remaining eight records were in lighter vein, with music hall numbers such as George Lashwood's "Take a tip from Father" and Little Tich's "The Weather".

A fine entertaining programme with something for everyone. Thanks Eddie.

Geoff Howl

Local Treasurers and subscription payments in local currency:

Cheques and money orders to be made payable to C.L.P.G.S. It is vital that such members send their subscriptions to the local treasurers by 5th March 1992 so that their names can be included in the April mailing list. Those who fail to do this should send their subscriptions direct to Chris Hamilton, Hon.Treasurer C.L.P.G.S., [redacted] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP, United Kingdom

Norway and Sweden: Mr T. Valle, [redacted] Oslo 10, Norway

Amount: 120 Norwegian Kroner

Australia: Mr T. Badham, [redacted] Pymble, NSW 2073, Australia

Amount: 30 Australian Dollars

New Zealand: Mrs J. H. Sutcliffe, [redacted] Upper Hutt, Nr. Wellington, New Zealand

Amount: 38 New Zealand Dollars

Would all members please pay their subscriptions by the 5th March 1992. Late payments can cause a lot of extra work and expense which is reflected in the Society's costs and delays delivery of the magazine to the late payers.

FROM THE ROSTRUM

Christies South Kensington Ltd. 5th December 1991

Following a stronger than usual radio section (in which a Marconiphone RB7 brought £3,400 and a radiogram with built in Baird Televisor £1,800), the gramophone section of this sale opened with a bang in the form of a £1,000 bid for a plaster-of-Paris bust of Edison (discussed elsewhere in this issue). There followed a cluster of re-entrants: no less than three 163s (at £500 and £550), a 194 with horrifically peeling veneer at £2,400, a 193 (which at £3,000 did not quite reach its owner's expectations) and a 202 in excellent condition except for one little thing — it had no re-entrant tone chamber. One might think that a re-entrantless re-entrant would be of limited value — but it still achieved £2,200.

Another incomplete machine was an E. M. Ginn Expert Senior, in a mahogany cabinet on cabriole legs with claw-and-ball feet. It had no sound box and, more seriously, the horn had been shortened by about 6 inches, reducing the mouth diameter to a mere 24 inches. It still managed to raise £950. A Junior (which also has a 24 inch horn, but is meant to) brought £1,100.

The same price was reached by a machine from the opposite end of the acoustic reproduction scale — a G&T New Style No.3 of 1904. This is the machine often passed off as a "trade-mark", but it has a different motor, Concert soundbox and nickel-plated zinc horn. The real thing was represented by a brass-horned example with a teak transit case, at £2,200. It was not quite as immaculate as the one which made the same sum in the summer, although on the plus side the horn, although battered, had its original lacquer. To prove its Victorian origin, it came with a record of God Save The Queen. Thirty-two other 7 inch Berliners, sold in three lots, worked out at £10 to £17 a piece.

Cylinder machines were topped by a Class M at £3,800. This was a clean example, in full-width light oak case, and complete with both the accessories drawer and swarf drawer. For originality, though, the prize went to a Mermaid Puck — immaculate in its original cardboard case with instructions and an interesting sales letter of July 1908 from the suppliers, who were clearly desperate to sell these obsolescent machines at 5/11d post paid. Another historical curiosity was a Gem with an unusual

4-minute gear conversion patented in 1909 by the makers of Clarion cylinders, and a Walshaw turnover stylus in the C reproducer. The Model C is the most attractive of the Black Gems, and with an octagonal horn it would probably have made £300, or not much less, even without this rare conversion. Perhaps the most surprising price was £800 for a Fireside with R reproducer and cygnet horn — surprising because the case had been stripped and revarnished in light oak, and its standard No.10 cygnet horn had somehow acquired a "Music Master" transfer.

Prices quoted do not include the 10% buyers premium.

Christopher Proudfoot

Phillips West Two, 6th November 1991

Who says you can't get a phonograph for ten quid anymore? Well I would have a few weeks ago, that is until one went for the price of a good curry takeaway. It was an open-works type and so what if it was missing its governor, reproducer and horn? And who cares if you'd need to tie the lid down to keep the woodworm from walking away with it? Just stick a reproduction aluminium horn on it, put it on the top shelf (too high for close inspection) and wham, something to show the neighbours.

Now don't get me wrong, not everything was that cheap, in fact not much was cheap. Out of the two hundred lots of phonographs and gramophones, only nine failed to sell.

Highest price was not surprisingly £2,860 for an HMV Model 193. A replaced soundbox and large cut on the lid surely had some effect on this, but I consider it a good realistic price. For those with even more space though, an HMV Automatic 1 might be more appropriate. In the past, the temperamental nature of these beasts have undermined their re-entrant horns to such an extent that one could only hope for a price in the low hundreds, if anything. Not now though, as one on offer sold for £1,210. Another big sound producer was an Expert Senior with All-Range horn. This one was on a rarely seen record stand, but there was a noticeable sag in the horn. Nonetheless, it made £2,200.

But big machines didn't have a monopoly on big prices. A Phonopostal in remarkably good condition sold for £1,650. For those who aren't familiar with this type perhaps a brief description is in order. Basically it is an upright open-works machine which uses postcards instead of cylinders, the cards being coated in wax on one side with a picture on the other.

TEL: 0454 575224

The card is mounted on an oblong turntable and the floating reproducer leads to a conical paper horn. This example came with its recorder and matching recording horn.

Machines valued for their decorative qualities more than for sound or rarity fared well. Two Klingsors were on offer, the first, an oak model with chequered stringing made £990 (plus 17.5% VAT) and the second, in mahogany but without pediment or soundbox made £935. A Tyrela in an oval mahogany case in the style of a Sheraton period winecooler sold for £440 and an Edison Bell Electron cabinet model with chinoiserie decoration made £660.

There was a wide choice of late/better quality Edison Laboratory products on offer for those with more traditional tastes. These included a Concert lacking its slip-on mandrel at £825, a Model B Triumph with No.11 Cygnet horn at £660, a Model E Triumph with oak Music Master horn at £1,045, a Chippendale Diamond Disc machine at £528 and an Amberola A-1 at £880. Two common Edisons which deserve mention were a very original "suitcase" Standard at £418 and a Home with a large bright red flower horn and front mounted crane at £770.

As for Mr Edison's rivals at Camden and Hayes, their products also fared well; £1,540 bought a Trade-mark machine sans horn. This was however an American "National Gramophone Co." version not often found here. The same price also bought an HMV Model 460 with Lumière diaphragm. But for £1,100 and a few 5 Pfennig coins you could have had a D.G.A.G. No.3b

coin-operated gramophone from circa 1905. Although the complicated soundbox lifting device was incomplete, the case was as good as could be hoped for, and should certainly be an impressive piece when put right. As an aside, our Chairman (of C.L.P.G.S. not Phillips) tells me that coin-slot models were sent from Europe, especially Germany, so where have they all gone?

Finally, three pieces of historic interest. A rare surviving Caruso cylinder by Pathé/A.I.C.C., No. 84003 "Tu non mi vuoi più bene" and a Salon one as well sold for £242. Next was a Timbrephone of circa 1920. This machine was of virtually all wood construction with soundbox, coil-shaped tone arm and internal horn. It was of good quality and I doubt if many were made so £605 must be a good price. The third rarity (possibly unique) was a Deuxphone soundbox, circa 1905. From what I have been able to deduce only one Deuxphone has ever been reported, and this one was incomplete. For the sake of those who haven't read V. K. Chew's Talking machines, the Deuxphone was a combined cylinder and disc player made in Newton Abbot. Well the soundbox cost someone only £66 — hands up all those who wish they'd put their hands up!

Our next sale will be on 13th May and entries will be accepted until 1st April 1992.

George Glastris

Forthcoming Meetings

London Meetings

London Meetings are held at The National Sound Archive, 29, Exhibition Road, Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at 7.00pm (unless noted otherwise). See Editor's Chat column for changes.

February 19th

Len Watts on "Records that give me pleasure" Part 2

March 19th

"The Gramophone as an Historic Document" Part 3 with

Chris Hamilton

April 16th

"Your very own.....Music Hall and Variety on film" presented by George Frow and Len Watts

May 21st

"Old records, new music" by Peter Adamson



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: 2 April, 9.00a.m. – 12noon

Enquiries: Christopher Proudfoot on [REDACTED]

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Closing date for entries: 13 February

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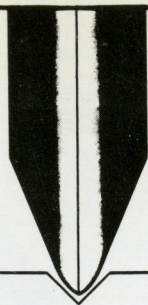
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